THE BARLOW
RC HIGH SCHOOL

SERVE · PRAY · ACHIEVE · RESPECT

Rise up,
take courage,
and do it.

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Mission Statement

As a Catholic school, our mission is to show love through our respect for others.

We value our God-given gifts, talents and abilities.
Our aim is to bring out the best in everyone, within a safe and happy environment.

Everyone should know that we are followers of God by what we do, not just by what we say.

RATIFIED BY GOVERNING BODY	**November 2026**
DUE FOR REVIEW	**November 2028**

Contents

1. The Policy..... 4
2. Purpose of the Policy..... 5
3. Roles and Responsibilities..... 6
4. Stages of the Policy..... 8
5. Handling of Campaign Complaints..... 13
6. Withdrawal of a Complaint..... 13
7. Next Steps..... 13
8. Monitoring compliance with the Policy..... 14
9. Serial Complaints..... 14
10. Unreasonable Complaints 15

Appendix 1: Informal Resolution..... 16

Appendix 2: Formal Resolution..... 17

Appendix 3: School Complaints Flowchart..... 19

1. THE POLICY

At The Barlow RC High School, we work hard to establish and maintain good relationships with everyone in the school community. Occasionally, expectations are not met, and issues need to be resolved. This policy sets out how we will deal with any concerns or complaints raised.

Who can make a complaint?

a) This policy can be used by any person, including parents/carers, pupils and members of the public who wish to raise a concern or complaint about any provision of facilities or services that are provided at our school except in respect of: **Admissions to schools; Statutory assessments of Special Educational Needs (SEN); School re-organisation proposals; Matters likely to require Child Protection Investigation** - Concerns should be raised directly with local authorities (LA). For school admissions, it will depend on who is the admission authority (either the school or the LA). Complaints about admission appeals for maintained schools are dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman.

b) **Parental Complaints** – Further information about raising parental complaints can be found at https://www.parentkind.org.uk/assets/parents-resources/Parent-Guide-to-School-Complaints.pdf

c) **Exclusion of children from school** - Further information about raising concerns about exclusion can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions

d) **Whistleblowing** – The school has an internal whistleblowing procedure for employees and voluntary staff.

e) **Staff grievances and disciplinary procedures** - These matters will invoke the school's internal grievance and disciplinary procedures. Complainants will not be informed of the outcome of any investigation; however, the complainant will be notified that the matter is being addressed.

f) **Complaints Third Party** - If your complaint relates to the service provided by a third party on school premises, for example an after-school club run by an outside agency you should use the complaints procedure of the external provider and not this procedure. Contact details of outside providers can be obtained from the school office should you require them.

g) **Matters likely to require a Child Protection Investigation** - Complaints about child protection matters are handled under our child protection and safeguarding policy and in accordance with relevant statutory guidance. If you have serious concerns, you may wish to contact the local authority designated officer (LADO) who has local responsibility for safeguarding.

When to use this policy?

The Barlow RC High School recognises that not all expressions of dissatisfaction are complaints. If you have any concerns ("which may be defined as an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought") please speak to the relevant member of staff, this is likely to be your child's subject teacher, the Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director of Key Stage in the first instance. It is anticipated that most concerns can be addressed informally and on a timely basis, often by the clarification of issues or the provision of information without resorting to any formal procedures. We are keen to work with you to resolve any complaints at the earliest possible stage.

Concerns should be raised with either the subject teacher, Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director of Key Stage in the first instance. The Governing Body expects that most concerns can be resolved informally and recognises that the majority of issues by complainants or pupils are concerns rather than complaints. The school will use its best endeavours to resolve any concerns that are made on this basis.

If the informal procedures fail to resolve the issue, a formal complaint about any matter (except for those listed in (a) to (e) above), may be made to the Headteacher or other relevant party in the first instance. See Stage 2 below for who to address complaints to, dependent upon the subject of the complaint. "… A complaint may be defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions taken or a lack of action".

Complainants should not contact individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. They have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.

Every complaint will receive fair and proper consideration. Complaints must be raised within three months of the incident or, where a series of associated incidents have occurred, within three months of the last of these incidents. We will consider complaints made outside of this time frame if exceptional circumstances apply.

The school will do all it can to resolve concerns or complaints and to ensure complainants are happy with the education their child receives at the school. Complainants' and pupils can be assured that all complaints and expressions of concern, whether raised informally or formally, will be treated seriously and will be dealt with in a sensitive, impartial and confidential manner. The school will seek to resolve complaints in an open and transparent manner and acknowledge that complaints can foster opportunities for development and improvement. It should also be noted that serial or malicious complaints may incur appropriate action by the school.

Anonymous complaints will not normally be investigated. However, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors, if appropriate, will determine whether the complaint warrants an investigation.

The school will consider complaints received outside of term time to have been received on the first school day after the holiday period.

Correspondence, statements and records will remain confidential except in so far as is required by relevant Department for Education guidance and applicable legislation; where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection; or where any other legal obligation prevails.

It is reasonable and legal for personal information relating to the child/parent to be shared with the One Education Advisor supporting the school in responding to a parental complaint. Normal protocols in ensuring the security of that information will be observed.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- To encourage resolution of problems by informal means wherever possible;
- To be easily accessible and publicised;
- To be simple to understand and use;
- To be impartial;
- To be non-adversarial;
- To allow swift handling within established time-limits for action and keep people informed of the progress;
- To ensure a full and fair investigation;

- To respect confidentiality where appropriate;
- To address all the points at issue and provide an effective response and appropriate redress, where necessary;
- To provide information to the school's senior management team so that services can be improved.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Complainant

The Complainant or person who makes the complaint will receive a more effective response to the complaint if they: -

- co-operate with the school in seeking a solution to the complaint;
- expresses the complaint in full as early as possible;
- respond promptly to requests for information or meetings or in agreeing the details of the complaint;
- ask for assistance as needed;
- treat all those involved in the complaint with respect;
- Are clear as to what they want as an outcome.

3.2 The Complaints Co-Ordinator (this could be Headteacher or the Chair of Governors)

The Complaints Co-ordinator will:

- ensure that the complainant is fully updated at each stage of the procedure;
- appoint a relevant person to act in the capacity of the Investigator;
- ensure that all people involved in the complaint procedure are aware of the legislation around complaints including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 1998 and UK GDPR, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and General Data Protection Regulation;
- liaise with staff members, Headteacher, Chair of Governors and Clerk to ensure the smooth running of the complaint's procedure;
- keep records;
- be aware of issues regarding: -
    - sharing third party information; consent must be in place before this is actioned additional support - this may be needed by complainants when making a complaint including interpretation support.

3.3 The Investigator

The Investigator is the person involved in Stages 1 and 2 of the procedure. The Complaints Coordinator will make a decision on the most appropriate party to take on this role, dependent upon the nature of the complaint. The Investigator's role can include:

- providing a comprehensive, open, transparent and fair consideration of the complaint through:-
- sensitive and thorough interviewing of the complainant to establish what has happened and who has been involved;
- consideration of records and other relevant information;
- interviewing staff and children/young people and other people relevant to the complaint;
- analysing information;
- effectively liaising with the complainant and the complaints co-ordinator as appropriate to clarify what the complainant feels would put things right;
- identifying solutions and recommending courses of action to resolve problems;
- being mindful of the timescales to respond; and
- responding to the complainant in plain and clear language.

The person investigating the complaint should make sure that they conduct interviews with an open mind, be prepared to persist in the questioning and keep notes of interviews or arrange for an independent note taker to record minutes of the meeting.

3.4 The Panel Clerk

This could be the Clerk to the Governors, the Complaints Co-ordinator or an independent Clerk. The Clerk is the contact point for the complainant for the panel meeting and is expected to: -

- set the date, time and venue of the hearing, ensuring that the dates are convenient to all parties and that the venue and proceedings are accessible;
- collate any written material and send it to the parties in advance of the hearing;
- meet and welcome the parties as they arrive at the hearing;
- record the proceedings;
- circulate the minutes of the panel hearing;
- notify all parties of the panel's decision;
- liaise with the Complaints Co-ordinator and/or the Investigator.

3.5 The Panel Chair

The Panel Chair has a key role in ensuring that: -

- the meeting is minuted;
- the remit of the panel is explained to the complainant and both they and the school have the opportunity of putting their case without undue interruption;
- the issues are addressed;
- key findings of fact are made;
- complainants and others who may not be used to speaking at such a hearing are put at ease – this is particularly important if the complainant is a child/young person;
- the hearing is conducted in an informal manner with everyone treated with respect and courtesy;
- the aim of the hearing will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant and to that end the Chair will always ask the complainant what practical outcome they are looking for;
- the layout of the room will set the tone – care is needed to ensure the setting is not adversarial;
- the panel is open-minded and acts independently;
- no member of the panel has an external interest in the outcome of the proceedings or any involvement in an earlier stage of the procedure;
- both the complainant and the school are given the opportunity to state their case and seek clarity;
- written material is seen by everyone in attendance – if a new issue arises it would be useful to give everyone the opportunity to consider and comment upon it; this may require a short adjournment of the hearing;
- they liaise with the Clerk and Complaints Co-ordinator.

3.6 Panel Member

Panellists will need to be aware that: -

- it is important that the complaints appeal panel is independent and impartial, and that it is seen to be so; no governor may sit on the panel if they have had a prior involvement in the complaint or in the circumstances surrounding it;
- the aim of the panel hearing/paper review, which will be held in private, will always be to resolve the complaint and achieve reconciliation between the school and the complainant; However, it must be recognised that the complainant might not be satisfied with the outcome if the panel does not find

in their favour. It may only be possible to establish the facts and make recommendations which will satisfy the complainant that their complaint has been taken seriously;

- many complainants will feel nervous and inhibited in a formal setting; Complainants often feel emotional when discussing an issue that affects their child. The panel chair will ensure that the proceedings are as welcoming as possible;
- extra care needs to be taken when the complainant is a child/young person and present during all or part of the process; The panel should respect the views of the child/young person and give them equal consideration to those of adults;
- if the child/young person is the complainant, the panel should ask in advance if any support is needed to help them present their complaint. Where the child/young person's parent is the complainant, the panel should give the parent the opportunity to say which parts of the process, if any, the child/young person needs to attend;
- the parent should be advised however that agreement might not always be possible if the parent wishes the child/young person to attend a part of the meeting which the panel considers not to be in the child/young person's best interests;
- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.

4. STAGES OF THE POLICY

The policy has three main stages;

- **Stage One**
  - Concern is raised informally with the subject teacher, Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director of Key Stage in the first instance.

- **Stage Two**
  - Formal complaint investigated by Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Senior Assistant Headteacher, Business Manager, Chair of Governors.

- **Stage Three**
  - Formal complaint is heard by Complaints Appeal Panel.

At each stage in the procedure, The Barlow RC High School wants to resolve the complaint. If appropriate, we will acknowledge that the complaint is upheld in whole or in part. In addition, we may offer one or more of the following:

- an explanation.
- an admission that the situation could have been handled differently or better.
- an assurance that we will try to ensure the event complained of will not recur.
- an explanation of the steps that have been or will be taken to help ensure that it will not happen again and an indication of the timescales within which any changes will be made.
- an undertaking to review school policies in light of the complaint.
- an apology.

4.1 Stage One - Informal Resolution

Discussion with subject teacher, Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director Key Stage

In most cases complaints can and wherever possible should be resolved by contacting your child's subject teacher, the Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director of Key Stage. Your initial communication may be by letter, telephone conversation or in person by appointment.

The school recognises there may be difficulty discussing a concern with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the school/nominated person will refer you to another staff member. Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels unable to deal with a concern, the school/nominated person will refer you to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the concern objectively and impartially is more important.

It is anticipated that in many cases the matter will be resolved immediately by this means to the complainants' satisfaction. In some circumstances however, the matter will require investigation or discussion with others and so it may take longer to respond to the complainants. The subject teacher, Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director of Key Stage will make a written record of all concerns or complaints and the date on which they were received. (See Appendix A). Please refer to the School's Retention Policy to determine how long information should be kept.

The school will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve any informal concerns or complaints within 10 working days of them being raised, except where they are raised during school holidays or within 2 working days of their commencement. In these cases, the school will use its reasonable endeavours to resolve the concern or complaint as soon as possible after the commencement of the new term (usually within 10 working days).

If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally or complainants are not satisfied with the result at this stage, then complainants will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage Two of this procedure.

There may be occasion when some general matters are more appropriately directed to the School Business Manager. If complaints arise where the subject of the complaint is or involves the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors or the whole Governing Body, then these should be sent to the Chair of Governors or the Clerk to the Governing Body marked private and confidential and Stage Two of this procedure should be utilised for these matters.

Please note, Stage One concerns should only go to the Headteacher if they are regarding a senior member of staff.

4.2 Stage Two - Formal Resolution

<u>Complaint handling and investigation by the Investigator</u>

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis at Stage 1, then complainants should notify the school of their complaint in writing, unless the complainant has a sufficient reason to request a reasonable adjustment be made to amend this method of submission. Complainants should also identify how they wish their complaint to be resolved.

Complainants should not approach individual governors to raise concerns or complaints. The school governors have no power to act on an individual basis and it may also prevent them from considering complaints at this stage or the next stage of the procedure.

Complaints against school staff (except the Headteacher) should be made in the first instance, to the Headteacher via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. The Headteacher will arrange for the matter to be investigated and heard.

Complaints that involve or are about the Headteacher should be addressed to the Chair of Governors, via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. The Headteacher will also be informed of the complaint. The Chair of Governors will arrange for the matter to be investigated as they consider appropriate in all circumstances. The complainants will be notified of all decisions in this regard. In deciding the appropriate manner in which the matter should be investigated and considered, the Chair of Governors will have regard to the school's complaints procedure and the Department for Education's Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures, together with any relevant statutory requirements.

Complaints about the Chair of Governors or any individual governor should be addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Body (Panel Clerk as described above) via the school office. Please mark them as Private and Confidential. The Clerk will then arrange for the matter to be investigated and heard, this can be done by a suitably skilled and impartial member of the Governing Body (at Stage 2) or a committee of members of the Governing body (at Stage 3).

Complaints against the entire Governing body or complaints involving both the Chair and Vice Chair should also be sent to the Clerk, who should then determine the most appropriate course of action. This will depend on nature of the complaint. The Clerk may consider utilising an impartial independent investigator to complete stage 2 of the complaint's procedure, or co-opted governors from other schools to hear the complaint at stage 3.

Once a formal complaint at this stage has been received, the Complaints Coordinator may delegate responsibility for undertaking the investigation of the complaint to the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Business Manager, Chair of Governors or other relevant party, unless the Complaints Coordinator deems it appropriate that they deal with the matter personally. This person will then act as the Investigator.

The Investigator will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action but will endeavour to resolve the matter as speedily as possible.

In most cases, the Investigator and/or Complaints Coordinator will meet or speak with the complainants concerned to discuss the matter. The Investigator will use reasonable endeavours to speak to or meet complainants within 10 working days of the formal complaint being received. In cases where the complaint is received during school holidays or within 2 working days of their commencement, the Investigator and/or Complaints Coordinator will use reasonable endeavours to speak or meet with complainants as soon as possible after the commencement of the new term (usually within 10 working days). It may be necessary for the Investigator to carry out further investigations after such meetings.

The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting, and should inform the school of the identity of their companion in advance. It will not normally be permitted for either party to bring legal representation, but the school will consider it on a case-by-case basis. If a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.

The Investigator will keep a written record of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Where there are communication difficulties, the school may wish to use recording devices to ensure the complainant is able to access and review the discussions at a later point. "All recordings will be managed according to the principles of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, ensuring lawfulness, fairness, transparency, purpose limitation, data minimisation, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity, confidentiality, and accountability."

Once the Investigator is satisfied that, so far as is reasonably practicable, all of the relevant facts have been established, a decision will be made. Complainants will be informed of this decision in writing, giving reasons for the decision including the steps/action the school has taken to resolve the issue. The written decision will normally be provided no later than 10 working days after the Investigator and/or Complaints Coordinator has met with complainants to discuss the matter. The Investigator may also arrange a further meeting with the complainants to explain their decision.
If the investigator is unable to meet this deadline, they will provide the complainant with an update and revised response date.

Where complainants are dissatisfied with the result at Stage Two, they should notify the Complaints Coordinator, Chair of Governors or Clerk of the Governing Body as appropriate in writing within 10 working days of receiving the school's written response under Stage Two. The matter will then be dealt with under Stage Three of the procedure.

Complaints Records (including correspondence, investigation notes, outcomes and appeals) will be retained for a period of 6 years from the closure of the complaint. Where the complaint relates to safeguarding, employment matters, litigation or other significant issues, retention periods should be reviewed in consultation with the DPO and legal advisers.

4.3 Stage Three – Formal Resolution/Appeal

Complaint Heard by Complaints Appeal Panel

If it has not been possible to resolve the matter at Stage Two of this policy, within 5 working days of receiving a written request from the complainants that they wish to pursue the matter to Stage Three, the Clerk to the Complaints Appeal Panel will write to the complainants to acknowledge their written request in writing, and inform the Complainants of the steps involved at Stage Three. The Clerk provides an independent source of advice on procedure for all parties.

Where the written request is received by the Clerk during school holidays or within 2 working days of their commencement, the Clerk has 5 working days from the commencement of the following school term to acknowledge the Complainant's written request. Requests received outside of this time frame will only be considered if exceptional circumstances apply.

The written request for further consideration of the complaint at Stage Three of the policy will, for the purposes of this policy, be known as an 'appeal'. Complainants should provide full detail of their appeal and the reasons why they believe their complaint(s) have not been resolved satisfactorily under the previous stages of the policy. Complainants should also state the remedy they are seeking.

The Clerk will endeavour to convene a Complaints Appeal Panel as soon as possible to consider the matter, normally no later than 5 working days after receipt of the Complainants appeal. The Complaints Appeal Panel will normally consist of three governors who have not previously been involved in the complaint. Where the complaint is about the Governing Body, the process used for selecting an independent person/panel will conform to any relevant guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). The Appeal Panel may be supported by an independent Clerk/Adviser.

One of the Appeal Panel members will be appointed as Chair of the Complaints and Appeal Panel and their first task will be to determine whether the appeal can be held as a paper-based review (i.e., a review of all the relevant paperwork from each previous stage of the complaint including a written response from the investigator at stage 2) or whether it is appropriate to convene an appeal hearing.

If it is determined by the Chair of the Complaints Appeal Panel that there will be an appeal hearing held, the Clerk will endeavour to arrange the hearing within 20 working days of the decision being made a hearing is required dependent upon the availability of Complaints Appeal Panel members. Where it is not reasonably

practicable for the hearing to be convened within 20 working days, the complainants' will be notified of the likely timescale for the hearing to take place, which must be reasonable in all the circumstances. At the Complaints Appeal Hearing, the following are entitled to attend:

The Complaints Appeal Panel hearing, submit written representations and address the Complaints Panel:

- The Complainant (including parents/carer if appropriate – the Complainant can be accompanied for support purposes. It will not normally be permitted for either party to bring legal representation, but the school will consider it on a case-by-case basis. Representatives from the media are not permitted to attend.);
- the Investigator or Headteacher as appropriate although it is not always necessary or desirable to have this person attending the panel at the same time as the Complainant;
- the Chair of Governors if appropriate;
- any other interested person whom the Complaints Appeal Panel considers to have a reasonable and just interest in the appeal and whose contribution would assist the Complaints Appeal Panel in their decision-making. If a school employee is called as a witness in a complaint meeting, they may wish to be supported by their union.

Where the Complaints Appeal Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the appeal or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. In such cases all parties will be given the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Complaints Appeal Panel in support of their position, including:

a) Documents in support of complaint(s),
b) chronology and key dates relating to complaint(s), and
c) written submission setting out the complaint(s) in more detail.

All evidence will be considered by the Complaints Appeal Panel, along with the appeal lodged by the complainants.

The Clerk will ordinarily distribute relevant/appropriate documentation and evidence to the parties at least 5 working days prior to the hearing. Where additional evidence is received, further enquiries are required, or exceptional circumstances apply, this timescale may be varied at the discretion of the Complaints Coordinator to ensure a fair and reasonable process. All parties will be notified of any revised arrangements.

It is for the Complaints Appeal Panel to decide how to conduct the proceedings of the appeal, which should be reasonably informal so that all parties can present their case effectively. The Complaints Appeal Panel reserve the right to speak with or meet the Investigator, Complaints Coordinator and/or decision maker from Stage 2, where appropriate as part of this appeal.
If possible, the Complaints Appeal Panel will resolve the complainants' appeal immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Complaints Appeal Panel will decide how it should be carried out.

After due consideration of all the facts and evidence they consider relevant, the Complaints Appeal Panel will reach a decision, and may make recommendations which it shall endeavour to implement within 10 working days of the hearing.
The Complaints Appeal Panel can:

- uphold the complaint in whole or part.
- Dismiss the complaint in whole or part.

If the complaint is upheld in whole or in part, the panel will:

- Decide on the appropriate action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

- Where appropriate, recommend changes to the school's systems or procedures to prevent similar issues in the future.

Any decision reached that may have financial implications for the school will need the appropriate approval from the relevant authorities e.g., Governing Body or Trust Board, although any such approval must be compatible with the decision of the Complaints Appeal Panel.

The Complaints Appeal Panel's findings will be sent by the Clerk in writing to the complainants, the Chief Executive, the Governors, the Trust and, where relevant, the person complained of within 10 working days of the hearing. The letter will state the reasons for the decision reached and any recommendations made by the Complaints Appeal Panel. The decision reached by the Complaints Appeal Panel is the final school-based stage of the complaints process.

All complaint records, including appeals, will be retained in accordance with the school's Records Retention Schedule and normally for six years from closure of the complaint unless a longer retention period is required.

4.4 Stage 3 – Formal Stage Complaints about a member(s) of the Governing Board

If the complaint is jointly about the Chair and vice chair, the entire Governing Board or a majority of the Governing Board, Stage 3 will be heard by a committee of independent Governors.

5. HANDLING OF CAMPAIGN COMPLAINTS

The school may find that they have become the focus of a campaign and receive large volumes of complaints that are:

- all based on the same subject
- from complainants unconnected with the school

If complaints of this nature are received, the school will choose to either send a template response to all Complainants or publish a single response on the school's website. The method of response will be dependent upon the nature of the complaint.

Should the complainants in this situation be dissatisfied with the school's response, they may contact the Department for Education.

6. WITHDRAWAL OF A COMPLAINT

If a Complainant wishes to withdraw their complaint, the school will ask them to confirm this in writing, or where this is not possible in person or by telephone. If the Complainant cannot confirm their withdrawal in writing, they may be asked to sign a document stating that they have taken this decision and the date of that decision.

7. NEXT STEPS

If the Complainant believes the school did not handle their complaint in accordance with the published complaints procedure or they acted unlawfully or unreasonably in the exercise of their duties under education law, they can contact the Department for Education after they have completed the school process.

The Department for Education will not normally reinvestigate the substance of complaints or overturn any decisions made by The Barlow RC High School. They will consider whether the school has adhered to education legislation and any statutory policies connected with the complaint.
The Complainant can refer their complaint to the Department for Education online at: www.education.gov.uk/contactus, by telephone on: 0370 000 2288 or by writing to:

Department for Education
School Complaint's Unit
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD.

Should the complainant continue to make contact on the same issue the Chair of Governors has the power to inform them that the process is complete and the matter is therefore closed.

8. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY

The Governing Body monitors the Complaints Procedure, in order to ensure that all complaints are handled properly. The Headteacher will collate a log of all formal complaints received by the school and record how they were resolved. Governors will examine this log on an annual basis and consider the need for any changes to the procedure.

9. SERIAL COMPLAINTS

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school if related to their complaint, whilst the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

If a complainant tries to re-open the same issue, the school will inform them that the procedure has been completed and that the matter is now closed.

If the complainant contacts the school again on the same issue, the correspondence may then be viewed as 'serial' or 'persistent' and the school may choose not to respond. However, whenever possible, the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'serial or persistent marking.'

Complainants will not be marked as serial when referring their complaint to their MP, regardless of which stage the complaint has reached.

If the complainant continues the Head Teacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact the school causing a significant level of disruption, the school may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan.

10. MANAGING UNREASONABLE BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO COMPLAINTS

Most complaints raised will be valid, and therefore the school will treat them seriously. However, a complaint may become unreasonable if the person:

- Refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance.
- Refuses to co-operate with the complaint's investigation process.
- Refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaint's procedure.
- Insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaint's procedure or with good practice.
- Introduces trivial or irrelevant information that they expect to be taken into account and commented on.
- Changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds.
- Repeatedly makes the same complaint despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint (see above for serial complaints).
- Refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed, including referral to the Department for Education.
- Makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with.
- Uses threats to intimidate.
- Uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence.
- Knowingly provides falsified information.
- Publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Please note: the above list is not intended to be exhaustive and is for guidance purposes only. It is at the discretion of the school what is deemed to be unreasonable dependent on the circumstances.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, the school will immediately inform the police and communicate actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school.

The Barlow RC High School reserves the right to terminate or restrict correspondence or engagement with individuals whose complaints are deemed vexatious, frivolous, malicious or otherwise made in bad faith. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator defines the characteristics of a 'frivolous' or 'vexatious' complaint as:

- complaints which are obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious;
- insistence upon pursuing unmeritorious complaints and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason;
- insistence upon pursuing meritorious complaints in an unreasonable manner;
- complaints which are designed to cause disruption or annoyance;
- demands for redress that lack any serious purpose or value.

The school will not refuse to accept further correspondence or complaints solely because an individual has made repeated or frequent contact. Where a complaint is considered to be serial or persistent, this designation will apply to the complaint itself rather than the individual raising it.

Appendix: 1

THE BARLOW RC HIGH SCHOOL

Rise up, take courage, and do it.

Informal Resolution

To be completed by the subject teacher, Curriculum Leader, Head of Year or Director of Key Stage. Please ensure that this form is returned to either the Headteacher on the same day as the incident or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. A dated record of any further action taken will be attached to this form.

Pupil's Name: **Year:**	**Date Concern/Complaint received**
Complainant's name and contact details (to include address, telephone number, email):	
Full details of Concern/Complaint (to include date, time, place, parties involved and, in appropriate cases, actual words spoken)	
Action taken: (Steps taken, when and by whom)	
Further action to be taken if appropriate:	
Has information relating to action taken/ to be taken been shared with the complainant? (Y/N) **What was the complainant's response?**	

Appendix: 2

THE BARLOW RC HIGH SCHOOL

Rise up, take courage, and do it.

Stage 2 – Formal Resolution

Please complete this form & return it to the Headteacher's PA at complaints@thebarlowrchighschool.co.uk who will acknowledge receipt & inform you of the next stage in the procedure.

YOUR NAME:	
RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL (e.g., Parent of a pupil attending the school)	
PUPIL'S NAME:	
YOUR ADDRESS:	
TEL NUMBER:	
EMAIL ADDRESS:	

Please give concise details of the complaint (including dates, names of those involved, witnesses, etc.) to allow the matter to be fully investigated. Please use additional pages if necessary.
What action, if any, have you already taken to try and resolve your complaint? (i.e., who have you spoken with or written to and what was the outcome?)
What actions do you feel might resolve the problem at this stage?

Are you attaching any paperwork? If so, please give details.

Signed……Date……..

SCHOOL USE ONLY:			
Date form received:	Received by:	Date Acknowledgement sent:	Acknowledgement sent by:

Agreed Outcomes:

Appendix: 3

THE BARLOW RC HIGH SCHOOL

Rise up, take courage, and do it.

School Complaints Flowchart
Summary of Dealing with Complaints

